

March 2016

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LEARNING MATTERS



AGS
LEARNER

Stretch, Support, Share, Innovate

Newsletter: *Innovation*

INNOVATE Innovation



Innovative learners are creative and adaptable. They enjoy the freedom to imagine what is possible.

Spend ten minutes watching this clip: it will open your eyes to the relationship between schools and creativity. School kills Creativity (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1yl0MFYzXc>)



Broadly speaking, you cannot teach innovation. However, you **can** teach a mind-set that is receptive to new ideas and create an environment that allows innovation to flourish.

1. All ideas need to be heard – even the ones that seem ridiculous! The discussions of both good and bad ideas may lead us to something we wouldn't have thought about otherwise. Students need to know that all ideas are valued or they won't take the chance to share.

2. Innovation should be part of every day. Just ask the question "What could we do differently?"

3. An idea is not a single moment of inspiration but a network. Collaboration is key so encourage conversation and dialogue whenever possible. Watch

(http://www.ted.com/talks/steven_johnson_where_go_od_ideas_come_from?language=en) for more on how to create the sort of environment that breeds innovation.

4. Fear of embarrassment causes people to be conservative in their thinking. Establish an environment of trust and playfulness if you want ideas to flow. Watch

(http://www.ted.com/talks/tim_brown_on_creativity_a_nd_play?language=en)

5. Don't get stuck in unproductive routines: find the time to draw up new seating plans, change your room around, refresh the posters, start teaching from the back of the room, bring biscuits, surprise your students...



6. Throw a random factor in the pot: What is your favourite smell? Do you recycle? What's your biggest concern about the future? What is one thing you would like to be better at? Better to be boss or employee? Why is a raven like a writing desk? Why is a fish like a bicycle? Sell this shoe using the concept of a tin opener.

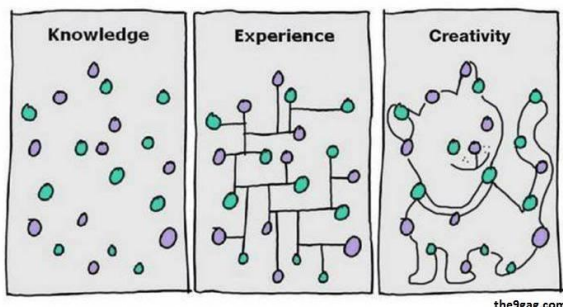
STRETCH Innovation



In training students to pass exams it is all too easy to standardise the process of tackling problems, to lay down a set of procedures to follow that lead to an answer that will gain

the most credit in an assessment. Our most successful students by this measure will be those that are able to grasp these systems readily and therefore perform well in tests.

We are however preparing our students for a world without a mark scheme and assessment objectives, where innovation and creativity are vital skills.



Especially for students who have mastered the exam strategy we should be encouraging students to value fun, diversity, collaboration, and intuition when problem solving and learning. For many of us this may include innovation on our own part creating problems that don't fit the exam model or with no correct answer, allowing our students to take risks and view failure as "fuel for innovation". If something does not work, we can learn from it, and then modify and try again.

As can be seen in the TED talks, fear of embarrassment or judgement can limit pupils' willingness to put forward a different viewpoint or idea. As teachers we should endeavour to foster a sense of community in our classrooms and here are a few ideas, from Laura Taddei's article 'Encouraging Creativity and Innovation in Yourself and Your Students' on how this can be achieved.

(<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/faculty-development/encouraging-creativity-and-innovation-in-yourself-and-your-students/>)

- Allow for spontaneous interactions. For example, during small group or large group discussions, allow students to discuss freely without offering too much feedback. If a discussion or question goes in a way not expected, use that time as a teachable moment.
- Create time for informal class opportunities; for example, provide time for students to talk and get to know each other. This can be through small group discussion, games, and hands-on activities during class time. Many times, these informal opportunities help for organic groups to form where students can bond and continue learning together.
- Learn everyone's names and make sure everyone in the class knows each other's names as well. If possible, arrange chairs in a circle so students can see one another.

Encourage students to be intrinsically motivated – remember ideas from the motivation learning matters, let the students know their work is valued.

SHARE Innovation

Thank you to everyone who has emailed with their innovative ideas. Our students must surely know how lucky they are!

"Just thought you would like to know that we agreed in Ancient History Year 10 that Hannibal (as in crossing the Alps) meets the AGS learner criteria!" **Mr Goodchild, in Y10 Ancient History**

"As an end of lesson 'treat' I've made them read out Ramones lyrics and try to imagine how the songs are played/sung - and then played it but I guess that's not what you mean.....!" **Mr Grant, in Business Studies**

"How, if knowledge is 'limited' to knowing and understanding, is imagination to 'embrace the whole world', when nothing is known about what lies beyond the boundaries of knowledge? How does our imagination move beyond the known world? Can imagination result in completely new ideas and understandings?"

Mr Twissell, in a thought-provoking Y7 Assembly